

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Updating software components that are required to appropriately process content data included in a data file. A computer having installed thereon certain software components obtains a data file that includes a required component list identifying the required software components and required versions thereof needed for processing the content data. The computer compares the information in the list with the software components already installed at the computer. The computer obtains an update table identifying network locations from which the required software components can be obtained. If the required component list includes software components not already installed at the computer, these required components are requested from the network locations identified in the update table. If the required component list includes new versions of required software components and only previous versions of the required software components are already, these new versions are requested from the network locations. In this manner, the computer obtains the software components required to process the content data. As a result software providing new functionality and other software upgrades can be efficiently distributed to a large number of users.

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